KING'S COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

THE KING'S MEN

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The King's Men

High Alto
Patrick Dunachie *
Oliver Finn

Alto
Colm Talbot
Rupert Scarratt
Isaac Jarratt-Barnham

High Tenor
Toby Ward
Daniel Lewis

Tenor
Sebastian Johns
Julius Haswell

Baritone
Philip Barrett *
William Geeson
Hugo Herman-Wilson ^

Bass
Benedict Kearns
James Jenkins

Low Bass
Robin Mackworth-Young +
Stewart Bates

* Musical Directors
+ Business Manager
^ *The Christmas Song* & *Quelle est cette odeur agréable?* only

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Recorded at St George's Church, Chesterton, 29 June - 1 July 2015
Producer & Editor Benjamin Sheen
Engineer Matthew Dilley
Mixing Benjamin Sheen & Mike Hatch
Mastering Engineer Nick Watson

Cover Design Andy Doe
Booklet Design & Layout David Millinger
Images © The King's Men
Label management Benjamin Sheen

TRACK LIST

1	**Gabriel's Message** *Basque carol, arr. Jim Clements*	**03:10**
2	**All I Want for Christmas is You** *Mariah Carey & Walter Afanasieff, arr. Ben Parry* *Soloist* Patrick Dunachie	**03:45**
3	**The Christmas Song** *Robert Wells & Mel Tormé, arr. Roland Robertson* *Soloist* Hugo Herman-Wilson	**02:42**
4	**Dormi, dormi** *Italian carol, arr. Guy Turner* *Soloists* Patrick Dunachie and Oliver Finn	**02:53**
5	**Wonderful Christmastime** *Paul McCartney, arr. Robert Rice*	**02:55**
6	**Santa Baby** *Joan Javits, Philip Springer & Tony Springer, arr. James Mawson* *Soloist* Daniel Lewis	**02:44**
7	**Away In a Manger** *William J Kirkpatrick, arr. Henry Hawkesworth*	**02:39**
8	**I Wish It Could Be Christmas Every Day** *Roy Wood, arr. Ben Parry* *Soloist* William Geeson	**03:28**
9	**Quelle est cette odeur agréable?** *French carol, arr. Henry Hawkesworth* *Soloist* Hugo Herman-Wilson	**05:33**
10	**Christmas Cards** *Ben Parry*	**03:36**
11	**White Christmas** *Irving Berlin & Bing Crosby, arr. Jeremy Davies* *Soloist* Philip Barrett	**02:16**
12	**Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer** *Johnny Marks, arr. Keith Roberts* *Soloist* William Geeson	**02:03**
13	**Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas** *Hugh Martin, arr. Jeremy Davies*	**02:24**
14	**Twelve Days of Christmas** *English traditional, arr. Keith Roberts*	**06:22**
Total Time		**46:30**

The King's Men

The King's Men (formerly Collegium Regale) is the close-harmony group formed from the Choral Scholars of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. As Choral Scholars we have numerous duties, including singing daily services in the College Chapel, touring internationally, and producing a number of television and radio recordings, such as the famous Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, which the BBC broadcasts worldwide on Christmas Eve.

Performing with The King's Men adds further exciting commitments to our busy schedule, such as providing entertainment at College functions, singing at several Cambridge May Balls, and giving concerts up and down the country. Many of these concerts form part of our annual tour, during which our fourteen members split into two groups, and visit venues across the North and South of England.

We also perform internationally, most recently in Hong Kong, New York and Bangkok, and have worked with such stars as trumpeter Alison Balsom, and the world's premier operatic countertenor, Andreas Scholl. There was also a now-fabled appearance as backing vocalists with Dizzee Rascal at the Electric Proms. In addition to our regular commitments, we run an extensive outreach programme promoting choral and close-harmony singing in schools across the country.

Whilst this is all absolutely brilliant fun, a great deal of work is required to keep standards high. Our Musical Directors work tirelessly to run frequent rehearsals in term time, whilst our Business Manager has the colossal task of organising the group's many commitments. The group itself faces the interesting challenge of a constantly changing membership as a Cambridge degree usually lasts only three years. Whilst in some ways this can be difficult for the group, in other respects it is a tremendous strength as each year heralds a fresh set of voices and ideas about where the group should go.

In recent years we have begun an ambitious recording programme, in which this disc is the second major product. Our most recent album, *After Hours*, which was released on the King's College label in 2014, drew critical acclaim and reached No. 1 on the iTunes Classical Charts.

For more information about the King's Men please visit:

kingsmencambridge.co.uk
facebook.com/kingsmencambridge
@the_kings_men_

Or get in touch with our manager at:
manager@kingsmencambridge.co.uk

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THE KING'S MEN

A Year With The King's Men

As Michaelmas Term begins, freshers arrive and leavers empty their rooms after their final summer concerts as members of the Choir. Our first main priority with the group is to teach the freshers as much of the standard concert music as possible so that they can start participating in performances as soon as possible. And indeed, despite the balmy overhang of the previous summer, our eyes are already set on Christmas, three months away. The first annual engagement every year is a large (free) concert in King's Hall of Christmas repertoire, normally held in the first week of December at the end of the Michaelmas Term. Moreover, as we stay in Cambridge after term ends to record *Carols from King's* for BBC television anyway, this allows us to do our annual carol concert at the Eagle pub in return for a healthy (or unhealthy, perhaps) tab behind the bar, and to sing to the patients at Addenbrooke's hospital who cannot get back to their homes at Christmas – always a rewarding experience. On Christmas Eve, we often have a BBC broadcast in the morning, with just the men of the choir, on top of the more famous *Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols* later in the day. After a two-hour rehearsal for that, we go out and serenade the queue (some members of which have been braving the elements for a couple of days to ensure good seats) with our close-harmony Christmas fare, before a hearty brunch. All of the repertoire on this disc has been performed at these Christmas events in recent years.

The real climax of the King's Men's year comes when we go on our annual national tour (usually in the Easter holidays) and perform nine or ten concerts over the course of about as many days. The sequence of music in our concerts is in a tried and tested format of four quarters (interspersed with an interval and some light contributions from our organ scholars), covering the whole range of our repertoire. We start off with early sacred music of the 16th and 17th centuries, moving to arrangements of folk-songs in the second quarter. After the interval we have traditional spirituals and jazz before moving on to the more popular repertoire to close. It's an eclectic mix, but it does work. Each piece is preceded by a short, spoken introduction, by one of our number, and we endeavour to make these humorous (our comic expertise, it must be said, is somewhat limited). This CD, mercifully, is presented without those interjections!

After exams comes the onslaught of May Balls – a week or so where all semblance of a decent sleeping pattern goes out of the window. We perform in groups of seven, and sometimes we might have to sing at three different balls in one night, ending at about 5 o'clock in the morning. We always have an outrageously good time, and there is often the option to get a coveted ticket to the ball you are performing at – it's a fine deal. On the Sunday at the end of May Week we perform a concert called *Singing on the River*, where the audience sits on one side of the river Cam and we perform (with microphones) across the river, from the other side, on punts. The weather nearly always, miraculously, holds out and we usually present the same programme that we toured, meaning that we know the music well enough not to be put off by ducks, high winds, and the ever-present possibility of falling in. It never fails to draw in a great audience – sometimes well over 1,000.

To find out more about becoming a member of *The King's Men*, visit the King's College Choir website: **kings.cam.ac.uk/choir**

© Henry Hawkesworth

A YEAR WITH THE KING'S MEN

Recording *Twelve Days of Christmas*

The decision to record this disc came after the great success of the previous King's Men recording, *After Hours*, which reached No. 1 in the iTunes Classical Charts in 2014. The group learned so much from the experience of recording and releasing *After Hours* that we wanted to keep up the momentum, and build on the success of the previous album. Every year The King's Men gives a large number of Christmas performances, and over many years has amassed a great number of excellent Christmas arrangements. Though some of these were on a previous recording from the 1980s, we felt it was time to record some of them afresh, and addto them some newer and more up-to-date arrangements. So we set to work compiling a list of arrangements and making plans to record *Twelve Days of Christmas* in the 2014-15 academic year.

We were particularly pleased to be able to model these recording sessions on the ones for *After Hours*, and we were fortunate to be able to use our 'in-house' producer, Benjamin Sheen, with whom we had worked back in 2013, and engineer Matthew Dilley, who has come to understand the way in which The King's Men works, and the sound we strive to attain. There was close discussion between the musical directors, Patrick and Philip, and Ben Sheen, about how we would approach the recording – about venues, recording styles, balance of repertoire, and about the actual sound we wanted from the group.

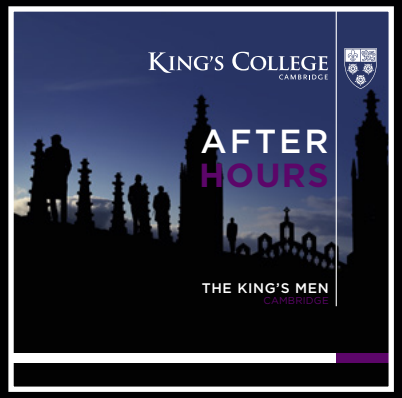
These discussions led to several coaching sessions from Ben Parry – Assistant Director of Music at King's, Director of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, and former member of The Swingle Singers. Ben's advice and coaching was invaluable, and he helped the group to leave behind some of the habits of being a Choral Scholar in the Chapel, and instead inhabit a more 'pop' style of singing. Working in detail with Ben led us to think carefully about our approach to each song. Even between those in a similar genre, we began to think about the precise atmosphere we wanted to create, and about which choral and vocal techniques we could employ (some of which were very much out of our comfort zone as choral scholars) to create this mood. Sometimes we wanted to evoke a cosy fireside scene – a glass of sherry, a comfy armchair, and a Christmas tree in the corner. Other times, we wanted to evoke a more sassy and 'cool' feeling, for tracks such as *Santa Baby* and *All I Want for Christmas is You*. Ben's vast experience, as both a singer and choral director, greatly helped us find these sounds for the disc, and for his help we are extremely grateful.

In deciding exactly *how* we would record the group in these sessions, we had several factors in mind. Firstly, we wanted the disc to reflect a live performance by The King's Men. To achieve this, we recorded everything 'live', meaning that the whole group was present, and standing together in the formation we would for a concert; we decided none of the tracks warranted a studio recording, as the sound of the group altogether, in a real acoustic, suited the music better. Secondly, we wanted to make sure every singer's individual sound was able to be heard and appreciated, and this informed two decisions about the recording: several tracks were recorded with reduced forces (between 7-10 people, rather than the full 15), so we were singing 1-per-part for a more intimate feel; additionally, we decided to give every singer in the room an individual microphone, so that, even in the full chorus tracks, the blended overall sound would still consist of everyone's own voices and personality. Thirdly, we wanted to have fun during the sessions! So, we took with us to the church a Christmas tree, some decorations, and a handful of Santa hats for good measure. I hope you have as much fun listening to the disc as we had recording it!

© 2016, Patrick Dunachie

RECORDING TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE KING'S MEN & THE CHOIR OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

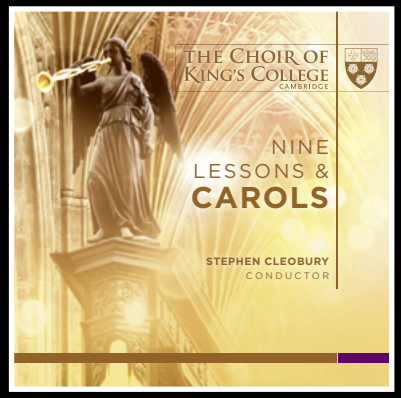


AFTER **HOURS**

THE KING'S MEN
KGS0006 (1CD)

Includes: I Get Around; Swing Low, Sweet Chariot; Wonderwall; A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square; Forget You; Never Had a Dream Come True; September; Tears in Heaven; I Want It That Way; Minnie the Moocher; Call Me Maybe; Old Man River; Every Time We Say Goodbye; I Want You Back

**** *Pizzicato*

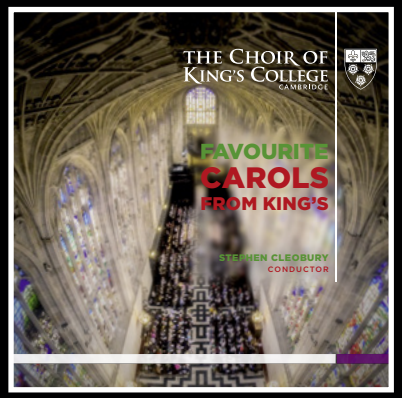


NINE LESSONS & **CAROLS**

STEPHEN CLEOBURY *CONDUCTOR*
KGS0001 (2CD)

Featuring the music and readings from A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols *(2010 service), as well as recent carol commissions, and a work composed by John Rutter specially for this recording.*

**** *Audiophile Audition*

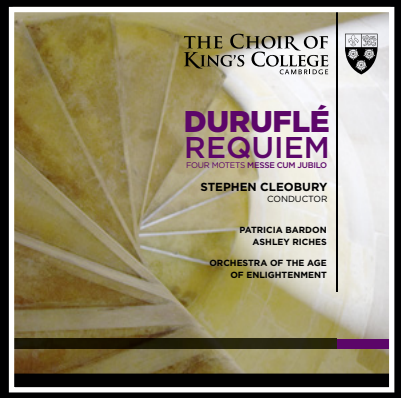


FAVOURITE **CAROLS FROM KING'S**

STEPHEN CLEOBURY *CONDUCTOR*
KGS0007 (1CD)

NO 1 *Specialist Classical Chart*

PERFORMANCE ** RECORDING ****
BBC Music Magazine



DURUFLÉ REQUIEM

STEPHEN CLEOBURY *CONDUCTOR*
Patricia Bardon, Ashley Riches, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
KGS0016 (1SACD HYBRID)

Released September 2016

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The Choir of King's College, Cambridge is represented worldwide by Intermusica Artist Management.
Please contact **mail@intermusica.co.uk** for further information.
For more information about the College visit **www.kings.cam.ac.uk**